

High School Pupils Concentrate in \$100 Essay Contest

Announcement of The New York Herald's Prizes Just Before Christmas Holidays Stirred Much Interest Among Members of Graduating Classes

VOTERS of to-morrow, the boys and girls of the high schools of the city of New York who are in the graduating classes, are busy these days preparing their essays on the obligations of the citizen for the contest which is being held under the auspices of THE NEW YORK HERALD.

The prizes are: First, \$100; second, \$50, and third, \$25.

As announced last Sunday, the theme proposed is one which challenges the younger generation to consider the present aspect of national affairs from every angle. The title is:

"In View of the Present Industrial Conditions and Social Unrest, What Are the Obligations Incumbent Upon the American Citizen?"

The statement in the form of a question gives the utmost range for the consideration by youth, which is ever ready to challenge—ever prepared to grapple with new situations and to propose remedies for ills of the body politic.

The form of the inquiry follows closely upon the courses in civics and economics which have in the last year or so been introduced into the high schools of this city. There are twenty-eight of these institutions for the advanced students, widely scattered over the five boroughs.

In the fourth year classes, to which the contest has been limited in order to get as mature an expression as possible, there are approximately 4,200 pupils. Of these about half will be graduated on January 31 and the remainder are to receive their diplomas in June.

One Is for Boys Exclusively.

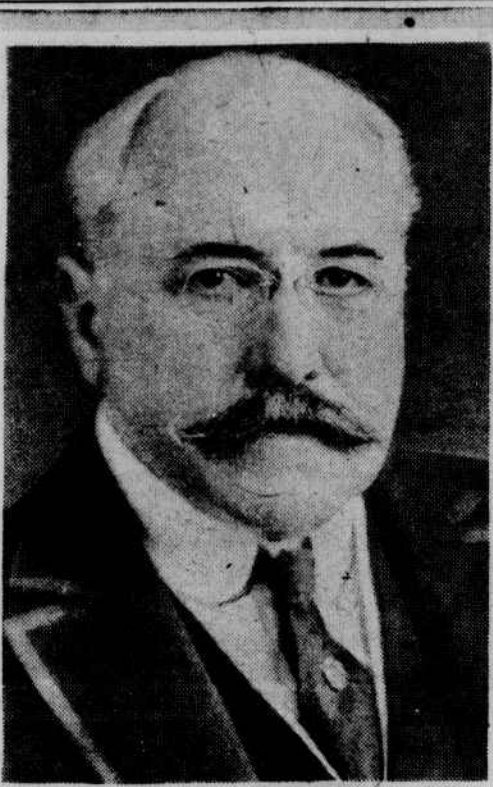
Another Is for Girls Only

There are schools in which only boys are enrolled, as, for example, the well known De Witt Clinton High School, on the upper West Side of Manhattan, and there are several important high schools where only the female students are admitted, such as the Washington Irving, situated at Irving place and Sixteenth street.

In the Washington Irving, which is only across the street from the house in which the noted American writer for which it is named spent many years of his life, there is a deep and lively interest in the contest. The students of this school have by tradition taken up all forms of community civics and politics. Many of the graduates of it have reached important positions in the world of business and scholarship. It was at this school that some of the earlier experiments in inducting the minds of the younger generation in the ways of government began.

The Wadleigh High School, at Seventh

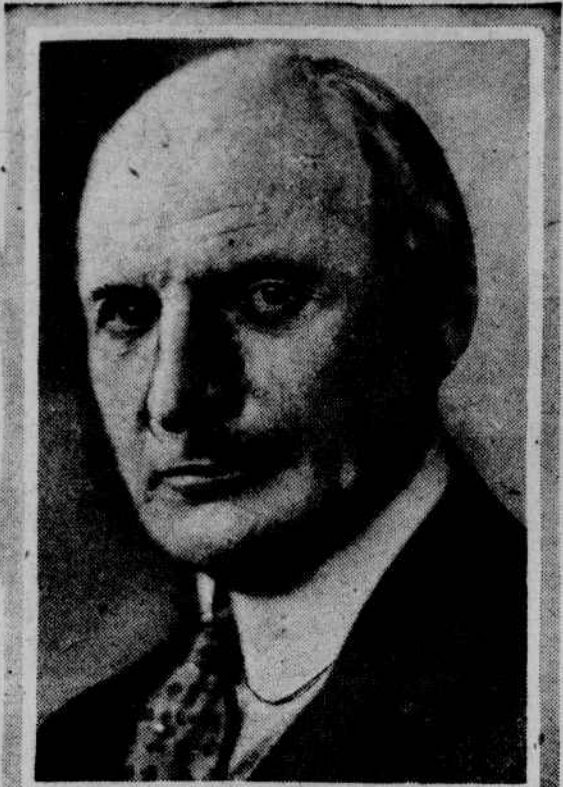
Three widely known persons who will act as judges in THE NEW YORK HERALD'S essay contest for high school pupils. Left to right: Alton B. Parker, former Chief Judge Court of Appeals; Mrs. Sara A. Conboy, secretary-treasurer United Textile Workers, and William Fellowes Morgan, president Merchants Association.



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avenue and 116th street, has girl pupils only, and it is also a centre of advanced thought on civics and economics. The students there wish to have it emphasized that they are not merely citizens to be, but that they are also surely looking forward to being voters. Equal suffrage is a shibboleth at Wadleigh, and woe to the man who does not in every way recognize the ever memorable amendment providing equal rights, which is now a part of the organic law of the land.

Class in Community Civics

Stresses Point of Citizenship

So explicit are they of Wadleigh on this point that the class in community civics, on whose behalf one of its members, Miss Clara L. Carson, writes, wishes to have this point made clear.

In her letter to the Contest Editor she says: "We are very much interested in the prizes which you are offering to the fourth year high students in civics and economics. We think this is a very public spirited movement on the part of THE NEW YORK HERALD, and therefore we take the liberty of drawing your attention to the phrase 'citizens of to-morrow,' which appears in the announcement of this contest."

"The United States Constitution defines citizenship thus: 'All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject

to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.' This, you see, includes those under 21 as well as over. Therefore, may we suggest that 'citizens of to-morrow' be changed to 'citizens of to-day' or 'voters of to-morrow'?"

"We appreciate very much your generous offer to the high school students."

The reaction of the students of the George Washington High School, at Broadway and Academy street, in the upper part of Manhattan, has proved most interesting. There are both boys and girls enrolled in that institution, from which voters of to-morrow are so shortly to be sent to take their places in the management of public affairs.

Arthur A. Boylan, the principal, said the other evening that the essay contest was appealing strongly to the students and that doubtless many manuscripts would be sent from his school. The work in civics and economics there is in charge of two able young teachers, who are in thorough accord with the spirit of the boys and girls who are working out their theses for the competition.

"I observe with much interest," said Mr. Boylan, "that THE NEW YORK HERALD stresses the need of all the essays being expressed in the clearest, most concise and most forcible English. That is a fine idea, and therefore I have especially advised the teachers of English in this school of that

phase of the contest. The voters of the coming generation should certainly be trained in expressing their views on economic and civic subjects with the utmost clearness. What is most needed in this country is accurate thought on the economic questions of the day. The incentive of prizes ought to stimulate many students who desire to make their opinions felt."

In accordance with the terms of the competition, as announced in the official circular issued with the approval of Dr. William L. Estinger, Superintendent of Schools, by Dr. John L. Tildley, the superintendent assigned to high schools, the judges consider not only originality of thought and treatment but also the vigor and clarity of the English composition. Students who concentrate on these lines are likely to produce papers which may prove notable contributions to the political writings of the times.

In the early days of the Republic some of the keenest minds, such as Alexander Hamilton, wrote documents which have continued to be models of economic and political literature.

At Work in Vacation Time

Gathering Data for Essays

The first announcement of the contest, which was made just before the schools were dismissed for the Christmas holidays, caused many of the boys and girls to do considerable research reading in their vacation

periods. With the return to their classes they renewed their discussion of the present day problems in the light not only of their economic courses but also in connection with extensive readings of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," which is being read by some of the older pupils in preparation for a national high school competition.

The closing date, January 14, has therefore given fully three weeks' time in which to prepare the essays. This period, however, represents only a part of the background which all students of the high schools in the fourth classes have for their work.

Although it is not known generally to the public, the high schools of New York city now have one of the best and most comprehensive courses in economics and civics in the country. The required, or compulsory, course in economics for the fourth year, which all students must take before they are graduated, takes into consideration all the ranges of preparation considered essential for the future voter.

The younger students are inducted into community civics in such a way as to be keenly sensitized to all their surroundings. They learn in the earlier stages all about the government of the city of New York, and thereby are made to realize how the city provides water, clean streets and protection of the health of the people. Thus the student is kept in touch first with the State

Educators Approve of Stimulation of Thought on Civics and Economics, and Widely Known Persons Will Act as the Judges

and then in relation with the Federal Government.

In these days, when radicalism is shouted from soap-boxes on the street corners and heavy accents are placed on half baked and untried ideas, such a course in civics has had a wide and salutary effect. The authorities in the eighteen months in which these courses have been tested find that the healthy and normal tone of the student sentiment has been deepened and strengthened.

No Trace of Bolshevik Ideas

Can Be Found in Any School

From what can be learned at this stage, with the time for the final closing of the contest nearly a week distant, the essays will show a sane and normal trend which will disabuse the public mind of any lingering impression that any Bolshevik tendencies are present in the public school system. In fact, a well devised test along these lines made little more than a year ago revealed negative results.

The character of the judges who are to pass on the merits of the essays will make the final awards most illuminating and instructive. Those who have been so good as to give time from their busy lives to the task of passing on the essays are:

Judge Alton B. Parker, a distinguished jurist and once Democratic candidate for President of the United States.

William Fellowes Morgan, president of the Merchants Association of New York.

Mrs. Sara A. Conboy, an official of the union of textile workers, who represents not only the outlook of the industrial classes but also is especially qualified to pass on the feminine point of view which will come into the offerings of the girl contestants.

On account of the desire to have all manuscripts brief and concise, the rules of the contest require that they shall be at least 1,000 words in length, but shall not exceed 2,000. They must be written on one side of the paper and preferably typed.

Winning Essays and Others

The winning essays will be printed in the Sunday edition of THE NEW YORK HERALD, and the Contest Editor may also publish meritorious manuscripts receiving honorable mention, for which the regular space rates will be paid.

All desiring to compete should bear in mind that the essays should bear the name, school and house address of the contestants. They should be directed plainly to The Contest Editor, Sunday Department, New York HERALD, 280 Broadway, in whose hands they should be not later than January 14, in order to receive consideration.

School Discipline in Its Workings For or Against Citizenship

By FREDERICK G. BONSER,
Professor of Education, Teachers College,
Columbia University.

IN America every form of school discipline may be found, from the extremes of the hard, cruel tyranny of autocracy to the soft, mushy, irresponsible license of anarchy. Between these extremes are ideas of control varying with the teachers' conceptions of the degree to which individual self-expression may be permitted without injury to the individual himself or to the society of which he is a part.

Those teachers whose practice is more or less autocratic hold that children are naturally inclined to be bad and that desirable behavior can be secured only by suppression, coercion and enforced conformity through a sense of fear. These teachers have no faith in any natural goodness in children. To them discipline is a form of police duty. They first secure "order," then they teach. Duty, obedience, the suppression of one's personal interests and impulses and "the majesty of the law" are sacred terms in the vocabularies of the autocratic teachers.

The mushy, anarchistic types are quite the reverse in their views on all of these matters. They have unlimited faith in the natural goodness of children. Self-expression, freedom in the unfolding of personality, pursuit of self-conscious enterprises, the consciousness of no law save that developing from within are slogans of those who would never compel conformity in conduct.

Of course, neither extreme is illustrated fully in the practice of very many teachers, but leanings are strong toward one tendency or the other. In either case the children are victims of the overemphasis of a point of view having something sound to support it. When the contest and impulses and "the majesty of the law" are sacred terms in the vocabularies of the autocratic teachers, we have a conception altogether more sane and helpful than either, a form which may properly be called democratic. By such a combination there is neither a harmful suppression of personality nor a riotous yielding to undirected impulses.

Two Kinds of Disciplinary Problems
Arise From Variations in Morale

Because children are children in their natural behavior, because they have impulses and interests leading to actions that are both beneficial and harmful, because they differ profoundly among themselves and because the school is established to direct their interests and activities along rather definite and common lines, problems of discipline arise. These problems are of two rather distinct though closely related types.

One of these is a problem in organization and management by which provisions are made for the general procedure in the various school activities, the ways of "playing the game." The general attitude and spirit of the school in conforming with intelligence, sympathy and pride to maintain these customs and standards represents the "morale" of the school or grade. It is evidence of the type and success in meeting this general problem of discipline. The masses of children will outwardly conform to almost any standard set up, whether repressive or loose,

Columbia Professor Analyzes Anarchistic, Autocratic and Democratic Regulations Under Which American Pupils Are Being Educated---Outlook Hopeful Despite Many Present Evils

without much opposition. They may be sacrificing their very souls in doing this, but, like sheep, they conform with docile resignation.

The other problem grows out of the fact that there are a few children who do not conform without resistance. These troublesome cases require individual consideration and treatment. "Nearly every school class has its two or three or half dozen 'black sheep' whose delinquencies vary from mere petty annoyance to the verge of incorrigibility. Under the very best plan of general school management and the most excellent teaching such cases may be found."

Quite apart from the immediate needs in the schools for certain kinds of behavior in order to accomplish the business in hand the school is reasonably to be held responsible for the habits and attitudes toward property, persons, the community and the State which are best for the maintenance and progress of civilized life. The school is a miniature society where the same ideals and habits of conduct should apply as in the every day world outside of school. School discipline is therefore profoundly significant in its permanent influence upon the social and civic conduct of children as they form their practices of conduct through habituation to school standards. There can be little progress made if there is one kind of behavior inside the schools and another quite different outside the schools.

As indicated in an earlier paragraph there are represented in the schools as in States three attitudes toward conduct, autocracy, anarchy and democracy.

The autocratic teachers believe in the dominance of restrictive law. Children must conform with military precision. Individual variations are regarded as hostile to group well being and are to be subordinated. Self-assertion is evidence of a "bad will," and such a will is to be "broken." Any who do not conform with complete obedience are to be forced by the coercion of punishment or by authority and not by reason of self-appreciated conditions on the part of the children themselves. The children are "subjects" of the teacher autocrat rather than citizens with her. Such teachers have no respect for children's interests. "They ought to be interested in what they have to get, and if they are not it is no matter anyway. This idea of having to be interested in your school work is all bosh." So spoke one of these teachers.

Autocratic teachers give orders. Their very questions imply orders to answer. Their voices are often keyed to a high, querulous pitch. Children are usually in such a state of fear that they dare not ask questions themselves or even make the slightest suggestion expressive of their own thought. Naturally about all such teachers get from children is what they have memorized from books. All tendency to self-expression is soon completely killed as far as school is concerned. The atmosphere is not conducive to growth of personality. Bright boys and

girls who are not sufficiently docile to conform are driven out of school as fast as they can get out under such a regime.

The apparent high morale of classes and schools under such teachers is most deceiving and the situation most dangerous. The only way that explosions are prevented is by the fact that the teachers are constantly "sitting on the lid." Remove the teacher from a room for five minutes and pandemonium breaks loose. No self-control is in evidence.

In contrast to the hard, inhumane autocracy in discipline there are now many teachers whose classes are practically without law, either restrictive or directive. These teachers hold that the desires, impulses and interests of children are natural and good. It is wrong to suppress these tendencies to action. No child can reach the full development of which he is capable if his self-expression is not provided for in the most free and unhampered way. Just give children the opportunity to express themselves fully and naturally and they will somehow work it all out among themselves and come out in the end good citizens, even if it does mean confusion and rudeness and selfishness and the neglect of many valuable qualities as they grow up.

School Discipline as Anarchy
Overemphasizes Natural Impulses

Teachers of this type are usually good natured, easy going, likable folk, quite human in general character and fine to get along with—as long as they are not required to meet responsibilities with definiteness, accuracy and promptness. Their children tend also to develop these delightful, Bohemian qualities—delightful as long as definite responsibilities are not involved. As we speak of the autocratic form of discipline as hard, we may readily dub this free for all type as soft. As the former overemphasizes the subordination of the individual to artificial, repressive standards of conduct imposed from without, the latter overemphasizes the degree to which the natural impulses and interests of children may be wisely left to express themselves unguided and unrestricted.

It would almost be better to close our schools than to have them encourage or even permit children to lose all respect for each other, for the aged, for institutions and for law. The dangers of anarchy are the greatest menace to the civilization of our country. To repudiate autocratic discipline only to fall victims of anarchy in the schools would be but "out of the frying pan into the fire." Under either plan children and society suffer from the overemphasis of a partial point of view.

There are teachers who achieve the sympathetic, cooperative form of behavior most helpful for accomplishing the school's purposes by mutual appreciation of the need of such behavior and mutual helpfulness in maintaining it. The children are guided by directive law, in so far as they are conscious

of law, but there is also the safeguard of restrictive law for such children as are not yet able to control themselves in such a way as not to interfere with the welfare of the whole group. Democracy implies self-subordination and control as well as self-assertion.

The teacher is a sympathetic helper and not a policeman, although, if need calls for firmness and rigor necessary to uphold the standards essential to the well being of the group. Freedom for self-expression and growth in qualities that are good are encouraged and promoted, but bullying, infringement upon the interests of others, idleness, shirking or blatant aggressiveness are repressed, through social pressure if possible, through the teacher's personal control where such pressure is not effective. Punishment as a remedial agent is not abandoned, but it is held in reserve and used only as a last resort.

Whatever the teacher's point of view of discipline, the teaching largely eliminates discipline as a special problem. The good teacher's ideals and practices aim primarily at developing the desirable interests and the latent capacities of children through the use of their experiences in daily life as a basis. She constantly endeavors to broaden and enrich their experiences by the subject matter of the school studies. If she succeeds in doing this children will be so absorbed and enthusiastic about their work that discipline, in general, will be a very minor problem.

Much of the disciplinary trouble in schools comes from the fact that children are naturally curious. They have very numerous interests which they try to follow up, and they find very little in much of the school work that is in any way connected with these things about which they wish to know more. Whenever a teacher begins to follow up the investigative and constructive interests of children, making these the basis for most of the work in geography, history, arithmetic and the practical arts, the whole tone of the school changes for the better. The problem of discipline largely disappears.

Helpful Direction Is Not Tyrannical;
Children Respect Right Sort of Guidance

Instead of capitalizing the enthusiasms of children many teachers kill them. They count all expression of natural curiosity as the outcropping of innate badness to be annihilated by any means necessary to make the job complete. Of course a situation of high tension develops. A contest is on. The teacher becomes an enemy to be annoyed in every possible way. She holds the pupils in check only by eternal vigilance and unyielding suppression.

Such measures not only fail to develop a desirable self-control in school but they lead to an abuse of freedom in the life outside of school. License always follows the removal of a tyrannical form of discipline. This is just as true of schools as of States.

To avoid the dangers of autocratic discipline, the radically minded have gone to

the extreme of removing all helpful guidance. Left free from guidance children tend to become selfish, offensively aggressive, overbearing and disrespectful of law and institutions. Autocratic discipline plants the seeds which will grow into Bolshevism when suppression is removed, but the anarchistic absence of directive guidance in school is itself Bolshevism. The extremes of both points of view are the enemies of civilized society.

Children genuinely respect that helpful guidance and control which is determined by the best ways of getting results with fairness to all in enterprises that are worth doing. In a democracy independent self-direction with a clear appreciation of one's duties and obligations as well as one's rights and privileges is the ideal goal for conduct. This may equally well be the goal for conduct in school.

Even under the teacher who develops the finest school spirit and whose general practices are most ideal, individual difficulties will occasionally arise. Some children are below average normal ability and some are above. Children of both types are sometimes sources of difficulty, particularly those of an aggressive nature. The general work of a class is either too difficult or too easy, and the energies of such children tend to follow interests which are different from those which appeal to the majority of the class. Flexibility in the work is a remedy for some, but either specialized work or removal to classes whose work is better fitted to their interests and needs is necessary for the more extreme cases. Special classes have gone far to remove the difficulties created by such pupils in many school systems.

Trouble also arises with some children as a result of home conditions. Some children come from homes where there is no parental control whatever, thoroughly "spoiled." These resent any control and frequently require severe measures for offences against the group until they are made conscious and thoughtful of the results of their own behavior. Others are from homes in which discipline is autocratic and dictatorial. These are at first unable to appreciate the limits of a wise, democratic freedom. They, too, have to be shown firmly and effectively where the further use of self-expression becomes an infringement upon the rights and freedom of others.

Personal Defects Often Cause Trouble,
Harming Individual and School

Whenever an individual child enters upon conduct harmful to himself and the interests of the school the teacher should try to find the causes which account for such conduct. Causes for minor delinquencies may often be found in physical defects or maladjustments of work. Children with defective vision or hearing, with adenoids or infected tonsils, or of under weight from malnutrition may not be able to bear the same degree of responsibility and self-direction as those who are in perfectly normal health. Mental tests will also sometimes show conditions of fatigue or

specialized inaptitudes which are not revealed by physical tests. The behavior of troublesome individual children should never be regarded as evidence of a vicious or anti-social spirit until the causes of the particular forms of delinquency are thoroughly investigated. The "badness" in boys and girls often entirely disappears when they are given work suited to their interests and capacities.

Nagging affects children just as it does grownups—it irritates them and stimulates them to unseemly retaliation. Sarcasm makes an enemy of any one upon whom it is used. No teacher ever helps a boy by holding him or his work up to ridicule.

In the development of the new education many influences are at work making for a more humane and a more effective type of school discipline. School work is being enriched by materials and problems which appeal to the interests of children and which are more closely identifying the school activities with the work and the events of outside life. This is changing the schools from places of mechanical drudgery to places that offer work no less hard and exacting, but work that is attractive and immediately meaningful.

The use of careful physical examinations and the following up of cases found defective are also leading to the revelation of causes underlying the behavior of children whose condition makes normal conduct difficult if not impossible. Almost invariably the removal of these causes is followed by improvement in behavior. Mental tests are likewise found increasingly helpful in accounting for undesirable conduct and in suggesting treatment that is remedial.

Teachers Becoming More Humane
Under Present Day School System

Slowly but surely also, teachers are becoming more humane and more just as they realize more fully that it is the business of the school to illustrate in its own practices the ideals of good citizenship and the amenities of social refinement. Constructive and generous supervision of teaching by able supervisors or helping teachers and the co-operation of home and school visitors are also means by which a more rational and just discipline is promoted in many school systems.

In school after school plans are gradually working out successful measures of partial self-government through the close cooperation of pupils and teachers. Children are more and more learning to take the responsibility for their own conduct, but always with such help and guidance as are needed from teachers to maintain worthy standards.

Without doubt, public opinion, a more thorough going and humane psychology and a wiser and better theory of education are driving out the autocratic, dictatorial and brutal type of school discipline. Common sense is also beginning to assert itself in helping to establish policies and practices of such law and order as are required in civilized society in the schools that have been experimenting in anarchy and unguided impulses. Hope lies in the golden mean—freedom for the development of all that is best in the personality of each child under the guidance of such control as is essential to the well being of all.